



Howard County Council

George Howard Building
3430 Court House Drive
Ellicott City, Maryland 21043-4392

COUNCILMEMBERS

Liz Walsh, Chairperson
District 1

Opel Jones, Vice Chairperson
District 2

Deb Jung
District 4

Christiana Rigby
District 3

David Yungmann
District 5

Minutes (Approved)
Joint Meeting Howard County Council and Board of Education
Monday, March 15, 2021
9:30 a.m.
Via Webex and live-streamed

Chair Walsh called the meeting to order at 9:45am

Attendees:

Councilmembers – Chair Liz Walsh; Vice-chair Opel Jones; Deb Jung; Christiana Rigby; and David Yungmann

Staff – Theodore Wimberly, Council Administrator; Gary Kuc, Solicitor; Margery Sayers, Executive Assistant;

BoE attendees – Chair Chao Wu; Vice Chair Jennifer Mallo; Christina Delmont-Small; Vicky Cutroneo; Zach Koung; Antonia Watts; Yun Lu

BoE and HCPSS Staff – Superintendent Michael Martirano; Jahantab Siddiqui, Chief Administrative Officer; Kathy Hanks, Board Administrator; Karalee Turner-Little, Deputy Superintendent;

Status of School Re-Opening – Presented by Superintendent Dr. Martirano - Dr. Martirano led the discussion about the status of the reopening of HCPSS schools. The Superintendent stated the following:

- 4000 of the eligible 9000 students showed up for class on March 1st.
- There is currently a hybrid learning model underway.
- Staffing has been the biggest challenge to date for the school system.
- 95% of educators have received at least the first vaccine shot.
- Approximately 63% of requests for ADA accommodations have been approved by the school system.
- Each school will get 300 testing kits to start the school year ... School Nurses will administer the tests ... There is a “Request For Proposals” for a COVID testing program in the school system. Each school is fully stocked with PPEs.

- The school system is planning to have in person graduations at Merriweather this year.
- Last month enrollment was up over the previous month by 128 students.
- The six foot social distancing requirement will continue to keep capacity at lower rates.
- There will remain a digital component in education into perpetuity.
- Free meals will continue.

There was then a Q&A session about the following:

- The shortage of bus drivers;
- The lack of Wi-Fi coverage in western Howard County;
- Immigrant fear in the schools surrounding hate speech;
- There was a request for increase counseling services for re entry of all students; and
- There was a request to add mental health support to the next joint meeting.

Status of Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) – Presented by Amy Gowan and Jeff Bronow DPZ. Dr. Wu Opened the discussion with the question about whether APFO standards were being relaxed. Gowan and Bronow assured the group that changes to APFO were not being considered at this time. DPZ went on to describe the General Plan process and the following discussions ensued:

- Is overcrowding and the concentration of poverty being factored into the general plan process?
- DPZ informed everyone that the different growth scenarios are being released to the public this week.
- There was a discussion about housing allocation areas versus school site areas.
- There was a request that a revenue solution discussion be placed on the agenda for the next joint meeting.

Chair Walsh adjourned the meeting at 11:58 am.